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C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN NEW YORK 000555

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/24/2013
TAGS: PREL PGOV PHUM KISL SA
SUBJECT: SAUDI KING ABDULLAH PROPOSES UNGA SPECIAL SESSION
ON RELIGION

Classified By: Classified by deputy political counselor Molly Phee for
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) This is an action request. See para 3.

¶2. (C) In a June 20 meeting with Amb Khalilzad, UN SYG Ban raised his recent visit to Saudi Arabia (June 14-15). Ban said Saudi King Abdullah asked for the SYG's help in arranging a special session of the upcoming UN General Assembly (fall 2008) on the political and religious components of interfaith dialogue. This special session would build on previous Saudi efforts to promote interfaith dialogue. Ban explained that the Saudis held a conference of Shia' and Sunni Muslim scholars in Mecca in June, and are scheduled to hold a second conference July 16-18 with Spain that will include religious leaders of other faiths. Ban expressed concern, however, that the Saudis had not invited any Jewish religious leaders from Israel to the Spanish event. Ban told Amb Khalilzad that he wanted to be responsive to King Abdullah's request, but would first welcome a U.S. reaction and views about the prospect of such a special session and how to structure it to obtain positive results.

¶3. (C) Action Request: USUN requests feedback on this proposal to provide to the SYG NLT than June 27. End Action Request.
Khalilzad